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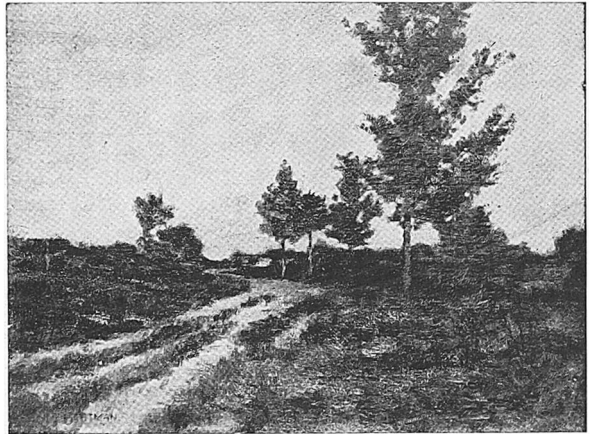
A PAINTER'S PROGRESS.

BY ALFRED TRUMBLE.

(Illustrated from original paintings by Leonard Ochtman.)

SOME ten years since a young artist came to this city from Albany, and established himself in a modest studio under the roof of an old-fashioned house around the corner from Union Square. He was not known among the guild here, but his pictures, which appeared in different exhibitions, attracted some attention, and there were those among our older painters, who are generous in recognizing and acknowledging youthful and new merit, who singled them out as the work of a man with a future. These pictures were landscapes, familiar pastoral scenes, of a charmingly peaceful character, simply painted, without any pretensions to technical display, but fresh and pure in color, and lively with the spirit of the subject. They commenced to figure at the National Academy of Design in 1882, were modestly priced, and found a ready market.

The artist, Leonard Ochtman, was a native of Holland, but had from childhood resided in Albany. It was hereabouts that he began to draw and paint from nature, guiding himself entirely by the suggestions afforded by the pictures which he saw in the art dealers' galleries, in occasional public exhibitions, and in such private collections as he could gain access to. He was, practically, feeling his way, and if his progress was not as rapid as it might have been had he received a regular



"A RUTTED BY-WAY."



"THE GRASS-ROAD."

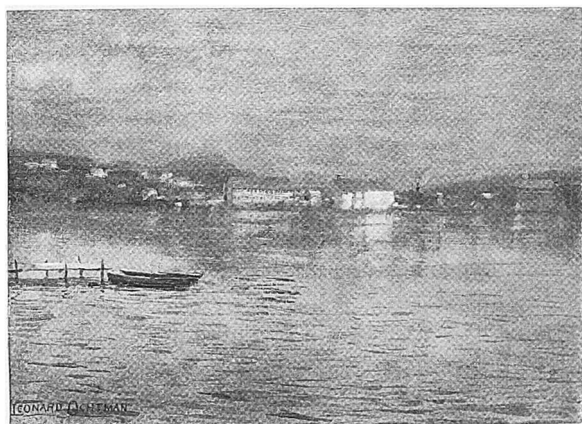
course of instruction, it at least resulted in his painting like no one but himself. He possessed the advantage of a highly sensitive artistic temperament, which rendered him instinctively appreciative of true beauty in form, line, and color. The late Alexander H. Wyant once remarked to me of one of his small canvases at the Academy : " Here is a young

man, now, who was born to be an artist. He is only learning to paint, and his work is weak and thin. But notice how he grasps the picturesque qualities of his subject, and how tenderly he renders them. He is painting his own heart here, you may be bound. He will soon arrive."

This prediction, uttered by one of the veterans and masters in American landscape, upon the suggestion of an unostentatious study of some bit of an Albany suburb, has been



"THE BOAT-LANDING."



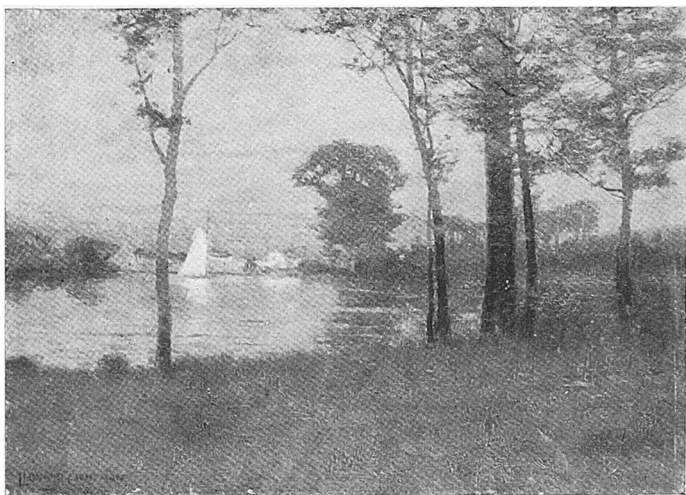
"ACROSS THE WATER."

amply fulfilled. From the time he settled in New York, Mr. Ochtman's progress was rapid. To the slender, reserved young man, with the refined and delicate face, whom many took to be a poet, as, in his way, he indeed is, every gallery among whose treasures he wandered, silently observant and studious, was a school. He had already, by a natural process of development, learned to think and paint for himself. Now, learning how others

thought and painted, he unconsciously gathered strength. His inspirations expanded, his growing confidence strengthened his hand. At each succeeding exhibition his productions revealed more force of execution, and grew steadily upon the favor of those who saw them. One of our dealers in pictures, a man not then much given to encouraging native talent, said to me, at an Academy show :

"Do you know this man?"

I told him that I had met him, and gave him what infor-



"A RIVERSIDE VISTA."

mation I could as to who he was. He listened attentively, with his eyes upon the picture all the while. Finally he said :

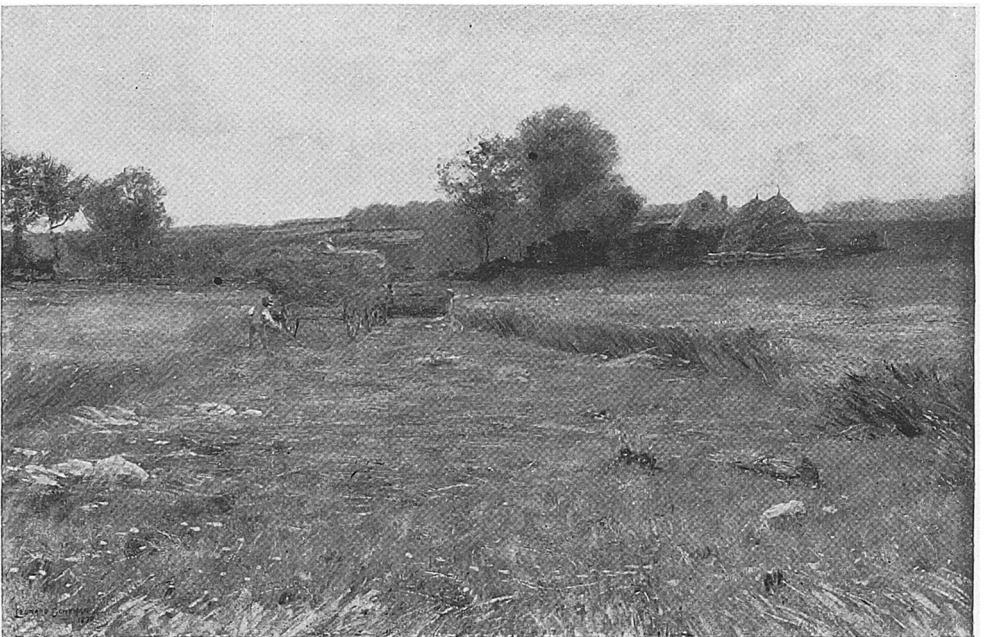
"I like his work. He's going ahead. I shall go and hunt him up."

The artist, however, was beyond his reach. He had accumulated sufficient capital to venture on a trip to Europe, and there he remained a couple of years. The pictures which he sent over from time to time demonstrated that his voyage was not being wasted. They elicited critical commendation and rose steadily in the favor of collectors. Most favorable indication of all, in the practical sense at least, for art must feed on something more substantial than air, the prices his pictures commanded went higher and higher.

I should add, to Mr. Ochtman's honor, that while he returned from Europe with his art broadened and fortified by experience and study, he brought back with him also that individuality which belongs to him as to all men whose education has been self-won. He paints now, as before, not like a student of the French, the German, the Dutch, or any other schools, but like Leonard Ochtman. I know no higher praise to be extended to him, or I should extend it.



"THE COLD, COLD SNOW."



"GARNERING THE HARVEST."